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General Assembly
Sixty-third session

Official Records

102nd plenary meeting
Friday, 31 July 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 48 (*continued*)

Follow-up to and implementation of the outcome of the 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development and the preparation of the 2008 Review Conference

Draft resolution (A/63/L.77)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/63/L.77. I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department of General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to inform members that, in connection with draft resolution A/63/L.77, entitled "Establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development", I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General. This oral statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

In operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would

> "[Decide] to establish immediately an ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development"; and
>
> "[Request] the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to submit a report on the progress of its work to the General Assembly before the end of the sixty-fourth session."

The establishment of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly constitutes an addition to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2009 and 2010. It is estimated that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly would meet until 13 September 2010 and would hold a total of 16 meetings, with dates to be determined in consultation with the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, using the conference facilities and services allocated to the General Assembly and its working groups. On the understanding that the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group cannot meet in parallel with the General Assembly plenary, and that no two working groups of the General Assembly can meet simultaneously, there will be no additional resources requirement for meeting services of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly.

As regards the documentation requirements of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly, it is estimated that one pre-session document comprising 17 pages and one post-session document — the same as an in-session document also comprising 17 pages, will be required in the six official languages. Since the Ad Hoc Open-ended

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Working Group of the General Assembly is a new body of the General Assembly, these documents constitute additional requirements for the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, resulting in additional resources requirements of $76,000: for the 17-page pre-session document, $38,000 in the biennium 2008-2009; and for the 17-page post-session document — the same as an in-session document — $38,000 in the biennium 2010-2011. Every effort will be made to absorb these additional requirements from within the appropriation of Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, in the respective bienniums.

In summary, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/63/L.77, the establishment of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly will give rise to additional requirements totalling $76,000 under Section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management, of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 — $38,000 — and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011 — $38,000. Every effort will be made to absorb these additional requirements in the respective bienniums.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/63/L.77, entitled "Establishment of an ad hoc open-ended working group of the General Assembly to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 63/305).

Mr. Fries (Sweden): I thank the representative of the Secretariat for the useful information that we just received.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the candidate countries Croatia, Iceland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

The European Union welcomes the establishment of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly. We look forward to participating constructively in its work under the two co-chairs to be appointed from the membership. The follow-up to the Outcome of the Conference on the Financial and Economic Crisis is indeed an important task. The United Nations must seize this opportunity to contribute to ongoing international discussions and processes on mitigating the effects of the current global financial crisis and preventing new ones.

Before the Ad Hoc Working Group can start its work in earnest, its mandate and working methods need to be agreed upon. For instance, the scope of the Working Group needs to be elaborated. We must avoid overlaps with actions mandated by the Conference to the Economic and Social Council and other parts of the United Nations system.

The composition of the Working Group needs to be specified. The European Union is of the opinion that the participation in the Working Group should reflect the participation in the Conference itself. Relevant stakeholders should be part of the discussions in the Working Group. The time frame of the Working Group, and a possible sunset clause, should be considered. The need for Secretariat support for the Working Group should be determined, bearing in mind the need for budgetary restraint.

The European Union is ready to engage in discussions on these and other issues that need to be settled to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the Working Group.

Finally, since the Working Group will carry out the bulk of its work during the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, it is important that the incoming President be well informed of our deliberations on the mandate of the Working Group.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to make this intervention on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM continues to attach great importance to this process, which is critical to the overall effort to address the global financial crisis, which has already severely impacted — and has the potential to further jeopardize — various sectors of our economies. The

fall in commodity exports, tourism revenues, remittances and foreign investment and the concomitant rise in unemployment have been so dramatic that several CARICOM countries have been forced to enter into, or are contemplating, a borrowing relationship with the International Monetary Fund.

The recently concluded Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis was, from our perspective, not an end in itself but the beginning of a process. Our countries are small island developing States which have no voice in exclusive groupings, and the United Nations represents the only forum for us to engage on such issues of fundamental importance.

It is in this context that we welcome the adoption of resolution 63/305, which establishes an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (resolution 63/303, annex).

We are of the view that the Working Group should seek to address the following issues: access to concessionary financing and grant funding to small, highly indebted vulnerable countries in response to the crisis; re-evaluation of the criteria to measure the economic sustainability of middle-income countries; the provision of new and additional resources to assist developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable among us, to assist us to rebound from this crisis; the need for a level playing field with respect to the treatment of offshore jurisdictions and the strengthening of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters; and the need for a comprehensive reform of the global financial and economic system in keeping with current realities.

We look forward to an expeditious process of follow-up and implementation. You, Sir, can continue to count on the unwavering support and constructive engagement of CARICOM in this regard.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the adoption of resolution 63/305 on the establishment of an Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome document of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development (resolution 63/303, annex). I am confident that all States members of the Non-Aligned Movement as well as all members of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) feel comfortable with the adoption by consensus of this resolution and look forward to discussing the scope and modalities of the Working Group in order to facilitate its work and to the substantive discussions thereafter, in order to submit the required report to the General Assembly on the progress made before the end of the sixty-fourth session.

I would like to emphasize that the establishment of the Working Group represents a follow-up to what was agreed on in the Outcome of the Conference and that it will strengthen the ability of the United Nations in undertaking its responsibilities through addressing the crisis in all its operational and structural aspects. These efforts should be coordinated between both developed and developing countries and in a manner that complements international efforts in other forums, such as the Group of 20, whose membership should be expanded to include more developing countries, especially African countries.

Moreover, we look forward to increased coordination between the activities of the Group of Eight and the United Nations, as well as other groups, mechanisms and international and regional financial and economic institutions. We fully trust that increasing such coordination will result in the mitigation of the crisis and its impact in the short term and will prevent its future recurrence.

Previously, during the Conference, we stressed that the international response to the crisis needs to be focused on generating more financial resources in the global economy in the interest of developing countries through providing resources, in full implementation of standing development commitments and in accordance with the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, the most recent of which was the Doha Conference on Financing for Development. There is also a need to provide new and additional resources that will contribute to assisting developing countries in addressing the negative impacts of the crisis.

We have also called for exploring new frameworks to provide credit in a more predictable, flexible and conditionality-free manner, as well as for reaching a conclusion to the Doha Development Round in a manner that contributes to providing a strong boost to the exports of developing countries and puts an end

to increased forms of protectionism as one of the responses to the crisis.

We consider it imperative to conduct a comprehensive review of the governance structures of the international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This would aim at making their decision-making processes reflective of the role of developing countries in steering the global economy and putting an end to the macroeconomic policies that are advocated by these institutions, particularly with regard to conditionalities and policy space, while contributing to enhancing the capacities of developing countries in counter-cyclical policies. There is also a need to revitalize the existing agreements between the United Nations and those institutions, with a view to achieving our common development goals.

We further note the importance of determining the means through which we will bridge the expected development financing gap due to the current crisis, and of ensuring that the economic stimulus packages of the advanced industrial States do not lead to new protectionist policies and increased imbalances in the international trade system.

Finally, Mr. President, the JCC stands ready to engage actively under your leadership in enhancing the role of the General Assembly in addressing all issues related to the financial and economic crisis. We trust in your ability and the ability of the President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session to lead our work to complete success.

Mrs. Osman (Sudan): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We are happy to see the General Assembly formally decide on setting up the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group to follow up on the issues contained in the Outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development.

The Working Group, as decided in the Outcome, will follow up on the issues discussed at the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis. We look forward to the early appointment of the co-chairs so as to facilitate the commencement of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group as soon as possible.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you and our partners in a constructive spirit and a creative manner to address, through the Ad Hoc Working Group, the whole range of issues addressed in the Outcome.

Mr. Normandin (Canada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ). We welcome the establishment of the Working Group in pursuance of resolution 63/305, which we ju adopted. The CANZ countries very much look forward to engaging constructively in the Working Group. Along with others in this Hall we anticipate a process engaging all Member States and led by Member States, with the help of facilitators. Above all, of course, we look forward to addressing the important substantive issue at stake: the impact of the financial and economic crisis on development.

But before doing so the first item of business of the Working Group will be to define and agree on the modalities of the Group, such as the scope and organization of work, working methods, composition, timelines and so on. Once again, the CANZ countries very much look forward to working with all Member States in this important undertaking.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines of course aligns itself fully and enthusiastically with the statements made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China, and has very little to add other than to say that we welcome the adoption of resolution 63/305 and the formation of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group.

Members will recall that the participation of CARICOM heads of Government at the Conference far exceeded the proportional and actual representation of other regions and subregions at the highest level. The high level of participation by CARICOM was indicative of the importance we place on the financial and economic crisis and the role of the United Nations in helping to address the crisis.

None of us are members of either the Group of Eight (G-8) or the Group of 20 (G-20), and the only way in which we can build upon and complement the ongoing work of the G-8 and the G-20 is through the United Nations and the mechanism contemplated by this resolution. We do not share the experiences of some developed countries, which now may see an end, or a bottoming out or the beginning of the end of the financial crisis. In many substantive ways, for Saint

Vincent and the Grenadines the crisis is just beginning. We think it is critical that we remain engaged in substantive matters on the crisis.

The reason for this intervention is to state simply that the contours and mandates and scope of the Working Group are well delineated by the Outcome document itself, which was adopted by consensus as the annex to resolution 63/303. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes there is no need to unduly delay ourselves orchestrating the dance of procedural angels on the head of a pin. We believe that the substance of the document is very clear, and we have had working groups before. The urgency of the crisis makes it imperative that we get on with the substantive work as soon as possible and not delay ourselves, as we are wont to do, with procedural niceties.

From the perspective of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a number of aspects of the document are of importance to us in a national context, and we would like to highlight some of them. One would be the elimination of unwarranted pro-cyclical conditionalities, in particular from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that would affect the flexibility to pursue the counter-cyclical measures employed in developed countries. We can find this in paragraphs 17 and 18 of the Outcome. Special considerations for the challenges of middle-income countries and small island developing States and their specific needs are found in paragraph 4 of the document. The need to mobilize an adequate share of any additional short- and long-term resources to be made available to developing countries, and the scaling up of development finance to developing countries are called for in paragraphs 10, 14, 22 and 31 of the document. The need for development partners to meet their official development assistance commitments can be found in paragraph 28 of the text. The need for measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the indebtedness of developing States and to avoid a new debt crisis can be found in paragraph 33 of the document. The need for equal, consistent and non-discriminatory treatment of all tax jurisdictions and financial centres and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters can be found in paragraphs 38 and 56 (c) of the document. And of course the ongoing need for further meaningful, far-reaching and substantive reforms of the global financial and economic system and architecture, which of course is set forth throughout the document, as we are all well aware.

The President: Today is an important day, in a very practical sense. I thank all Member States for establishing by consensus the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group — a technical and practical necessity. The language of resolution 63/305 is that of Member States, since it reproduces the language of paragraph 54 of the Outcome of the Conference (resolution 63/303, annex), which was negotiated by Member States. It simply responds to what the Outcome of the Conference had asked Member States to do. At high levels, during the Conference, the call was given for the General Assembly to continue to address this issue since the world financial and economic crisis continues to have a negative impact on both the developed and the developing worlds.

As I mentioned in my first letter on the subject, we shall soon announce the names of the two co-chairs — one from the North and one from the South — who together with the members of the General Assembly will determine the details of the work of the Group.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 48.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.